

The Garden of England



Above: Chestnut poles supporting hops.



Left: Local oast house.



Section of the Bayeux Tapestry, depicting William the Conqueror's invasion of England in 1066.

Kent has been referred to as The Garden of England for over 400 years. The title is believed to date back to Henry VIII's time, when the reference was made because of his enjoyment of a dish of Kent cherries.

From Mount Ephraim you can see the rich tapestry of orchards, pasture, hop gardens and traditional farm buildings that are bordered by roads, footpaths and lines of trees acting as shelterbelts for the orchards. All of which shows why Kent continues to have this distinctive title.

Beyond this panel and in the distance is Blean Wood. This wood once formed part of a large block of woodland that the Domesday Book registered as the property of William the Conqueror. Today it is part of the Mount Ephraim estate and the Blean complex of woods, much of which is designated a National Nature Reserve. These woods continue to have a fundamental role in shaping and enhancing the landscape character. Historically they have supported a range of industries both local and further afield. Today they continue to provide coppiced chestnut poles for hops, fencing materials, wood for building and heating and a place for visitors and locals alike to go and appreciate the beauty and ancient nature of this land.



An orchard with a view of Blean Woods.

the **Blean** is just minutes away...

Covering over 11 square miles, the Blean is one of the largest and most distinctive areas of ancient woodland in England, important nationally for both its wildlife and its history. The Blean has been a working woodland for over a thousand years, and continues to provide woodland products, including firewood and fencing materials, for local people. The splendour and tranquillity of this special landscape can be enjoyed on a network of paths and trails. This panel is part of a series of 18 located around the Blean. To see all 18 panels, visit www.theblean.co.uk. For information about walking in Kent visit www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent.

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